

# The Leather Journals

## Discovery

Last year, an old diary was found inside an abandoned building outside of the small town of Darrow's Creek. The diary was found by a small group of researchers looking for items of historic interest. The writings that follow are from the diary belonging to a girl known only as Claire. The diary that was found was donated to the local library for its historic value.

March 24, 1953

We've moved into our new house today and I bought this journal to commemorate the occasion. It's a rather grand house, old and elegant but slightly creepy, even in the day light. It is also quite isolated, nearly 10 miles outside of the nearest town and surrounded by forestry.

The attic is to be my room, I look forward to the solitude that I have grown accustomed to since my childhood years. The windows to the attic seem darker than what they should be, but I'm sure that years of neglect have left much to be desired through out the entire house. My foster father bought it from an estate sale after the elderly owner died. At least it will keep my foster family and myself busy until we get used to the new place.

March 25, 1953

I have my few belongings in my room now. I own very little, not much more than a desk, a chest of drawers and bed to set on the floor. There are crates though, piled haphazardly in the smaller room adjacent to my own. I plan on searching through them when I get a little more time to myself. They look interesting enough and who knows how long they may have sat here in that attic room.

Mach 27, 1953

My foster parents were kind enough to allow me to take care of the large garden space that encompasses the front and sides of the house. I have been told I have a bit of a green thumb, but truthfully I just love plants. How could I not when they must push through the depths of the dark soil and blossom into beautiful flowers in the warm sunlight. On a small note, most of the crates in the attic were empty though a few held a few old articles of clothing and other little trinkets, but one has captured my interest.

It is smaller than the others and contained, to my joy, a few botanical books and what looked to be packets of old plant seeds. It also contained a small dark wooden box, in which a key was hidden, an old faded photograph, and a braided bundle of pink and blue satin ribbon. I wonder what the key once belonged to, and I also wonder if the plant seeds could still be viable.

March 28, 1953

The move to this house seems to have made my family more irritable than usual. My foster father, Calvin, is having frustrations with the lawn, as it does not seem willing to respond to his care and remains a lank brown expanse in front of the house. My success with the garden seems to further his anger and frustration and he has begun to take it out on the house, refusing to correct any problems until the lawn is perfect to his standards.

My foster mother, Ida, was having trouble with remembering where she put things in the house. Not unusual since we are in a new place and we have not yet committed every nook and cranny to memory, but she has become almost unbearable in her frustration with the house and the misplaced objects.

I myself think that the harsher emotions and tension in the house is due to lack of sleep. I can hear both of them at night, walking

the halls and pacing. The noises of the house are also rather loud, the creaks and groans seem to go from one side of the house to the other, but even stranger they sometimes seem to come from the inside of the walls.

March 29, 1953

I made a disturbing discovery today in the cellar. I found the decapitated corpse of a rat. The little body was, strangely enough, dry and withered as if drained of all its fluids. Even stranger was, when I went to alert Cal, the corpse was gone when we had made our way back to the cellar. I thought it odd, and Cal was not pleased that I had dragged him away from the lawn for seemingly nothing. I assume that Ida found it and disposed of it, as it had taken me quite a few minutes to locate Cal. Tensions are still high, so nothing was said at the dinner table about it or anything else for that matter.

April 2, 1953

For the first time since moving into the house, I have genuinely become uneasy about the events taking place in the house. I was woken from my first night of sleep in days by an unusual sound. It was close to me, quiet but so out of place that it roused me from my dreamless sleep. Though I was awake, I remained still with my eyes closed, waiting for the noise to either cease or move away. Eventually, after what seemed like hours, the noise quieted and I waited several more minutes before cautiously opening my eyes.

What I saw would have been considered normal had it not been the middle of the night and had my door not been dead bolted from the inside. Sitting in the middle of my room was a chest. It was old but clearly well taken care of despite its age. In the front was a small lock, and despite the growing unease I felt in those moments, I got out of bed and fetched the small box I had found from atop my chest of drawers. There was no guarantee the key

would fit, but since there are no other locks I knew of in the house, there was no harm in trying. To my slight surprise, the lock clicked open when I turned the key but before I could lift the lid a loud thump sounded from the other side of my door. I was frightened for the first time since moving into the house and I stayed curled on my bed for the rest of the night, too frightened to close my eyes.

April 9, 1953

It has been a week since I last wrote in my journal. Mainly because the discoveries I made in the chest were so intriguing that I have barely left my attic room, mainly only to care for my garden and use the toilets. I found several books in the chest, all leather bound and handwritten journals, the covers cracked and dry and the pages yellowed with age. I have not yet had the opportunity to begin reading them. I also found several old photographs, similar to the first one I found in the crates. They contain several different people, obviously a family of sorts.

I feel a little uneasy as I look at the group photograph now. There is a man first and his eyes are hard and frightening, borderline cruel, as he looks at the taker of the photograph. The woman next to him is beautiful, her hair seems to be very light colored and she is kinder looking than her male counterpart. Then, in the outskirts of the photograph, there is a small fair haired girl, no more than three years old. She does not seem happy, her chin is tucked into her chest and she seems to shy away from the man. A very different expression one would expect from such a pretty child. The year "1926" is written on the back in large script.

The next photograph contains only two people. The same man from the previous photo, but he is obviously much older, his eyes just as frightening and cruel as in the first photo. The person next to him is a girl, she is younger than the previous woman, perhaps fifteen, and it took me a moment to realize it is the same little girl from the first photograph. She still stands apart from the man, her face shying away from him and her expression guarded. But what

strikes me as odd was that her she seems to turn her body away from the camera, as if attempting to shield herself from the photographer. This one is dated Feb, 1937 and labeled "Father and I" in small, curling writing.

The final photo gives me pause, it is of two children; newborn twins, one wearing a small, plain dress and the other wearing nothing more than a diaper cloth and little shirt. This photograph is also dated and labeled with "Alice and Henry, July 1937" in the same small writing as the second photograph. I plan to start the journal as soon as possible, I am anxious to see what mysteries its pages are hiding from the world. It is late now, and I would like to get to my bed before the nightly pacing begins. I asked Cal and Ida why they pace at night, but they looked at me with an odd expression before saying that they didn't pace, they had assumed it was me.

April 13, 1953

I am thoroughly convinced that evil lived in the house all those years ago. In the days since my last entry I have had time to read some of the first journals passages. The name Florence is written inside the covers of all journals, and I believe I can safely assume by the dates that she is most likely the young girl in the photographs. The entries of Florences journal knot my stomach in sickening ways at the horrors she was put through. In an excerpt from her first journal:

Oct 2, 1933'

Father has become convinced that I will leave him within the year. Though I desperately wish to do so, I fear I will never be free from my father's reign. I do not know where my father has gotten the idea, as I am still a few years too young to leave my father's house. Society deems that sixteen is an appropriate time to begin courtship for marriage, and being as I have only just turned twelve I have a few years yet before a man will take an interest in me like father does.

Though this particular entry is vague, I cannot bear to copy down more right now as it threatens to overwhelm me in disgust. Despite my hesitations, I will continue to read the entries in Florence's journals. Perhaps I will learn the reason behind this horrific behavior.

April 15, 1953

I am nearly through with Florence's first journal. I find that the closer I get to the end of the first, the more I dread opening the next for fear of what horrors lie within its pages. Along with this, tensions are running high within the house. Ida refuses to step foot out of the house since an incident yesterday morning. She is convinced that while she was hanging the laundry on the back line that she saw someone running along the edge of the woods that surround the house. This has spiked Cal's temper and so it has been in my best interest to stay out of his way. He has kept me busy in his irritability, giving me the chore of tending the animals. Which is also in their best interests as the last time Cal tended them in his anger, they wouldn't allow him to get near them for nearly a week in response to his rough treatment and handling.

April 21, 1953

It has been an interesting yet unnerving week since my last entry. I have begun and finished Florence's second journal. It is much the same as her first one, as if her life was on one horrible and continuous loop. I will begin her third journal later this evening; it will not calm me, though I am in great need of relief from the tensions of the house. But the most pressing event of the past week happened three days ago, on the 18th. I was working in the garden, when I felt eyes on the back of my neck.

Upon looking around I saw nothing, until movement above me caught my eye. There, in the window of my room, was a girl. I was

so shocked I could do nothing but take in her haggard appearance. Her skin was pale, as if she never really saw the sunlight. Her dark hair was long from what I could see, and was so tangled and disheveled that it was unlikely that she had ever used a hairbrush. But her eyes were the most striking feature, they were almost curious when they looked upon me, but when her gaze shifted to Cal working across the yard her eyes became hard and cruel, eerily similar to the man's in the photograph.

I am almost completely sure that the girl I saw in my room was not Florence or even a ghost of her, according to the journal dates she would be nearing thirty if she was even still alive, and the girl I saw couldn't have been more than sixteen. Though they had similar features, the girl's hair was dark while Florences appears to be a much fairer color in the photographs.

I will admit that I am becoming terrified of my attic room, but as I do not wish to incur Cal's wrath, I will simply have to take a chance and hope that the entity in my room is the lesser of two evils.

April 26, 1953

I am nearly finished with Florence's third journal. I spend most of my nights at my desk, burning a candle and reading the journal entries. I feel sorry for the poor girl who wrote these heart breaking passages. The latest entry gave me great pause, as I can not imagine such a young girl having to worry about such a thing, especially with her father.

May 8, 1935

The day has finally come, the day that I wish my mother were still alive to help explain the changes occurring to my body. I understand the basics, but a mother's words would help to ease my mind. It is now that I must begin to chew Queen Anne's Lace Seeds after father's nightly visits. I suppose I am lucky that nothing had taken hold before this, and that Queen Anne's Lace

grows in such abundance in these parts. I will be needing it.

May 2, 1953

I believe I saw the girl again today. She looked a little different but that may have just been the angle I saw her from. I was sitting at my desk, just beginning the fourth and final journal, when I caught a movement from the corner of my eye. When I peered out the window I saw what had caught my attention. A pale face peered at me from the tree line, and simply stared at me. At first I was unsure of what to do and as I raised my hand and gave a small, hesitant wave, the face split into a wide grin, revealing darkened and decayed teeth. The grin, however unsettling, did not seem to hold any malice or discontent. When I blinked the face disappeared and I went back to Florence's journal.

May 9, 1953

My days have been increasingly busy thanks to Cal and Ida. I have had very little time to read the final journal. I have also been having trouble keeping things in my room. I will often return to find something clearly out of place or hastily put back to its proper place. Once I returned to find my room a mess though nothing was missing, but the furniture was moved, my clothing scattered across the floor and my desk tipped over. The only things that seemed to have been left untouched were the chest and its contents, and the contents of the small crate and little black box. Although I did find several handprints, a bit larger than mine, along the window.

May 12, 1953

My heart breaks for Florence and her plight. No girl deserves to be put through what she has. Her latest entry sickens me to think about what must have been going through her mind on those terrible days. I cannot imagine how she must have felt. From her



latest entry is this:

Dec 17, 1936

What I have feared the most has come to pass. I should have known that luck would not be on my side forever, but I had hoped it would. Alas, my hope was not enough because now I am to be a mother. I had held out yet more hope that perhaps I was just confused about the days, but deep in my heart I knew it to be true. My fears were only confirmed even further this morning, when I was awakened by the feeling of nausea and shortly after tried to empty my stomach of its meager contents. Father will blame me, he always does. He will no doubt try to be rid of the child that resides within my womb. Father has no remorse and I have no doubt that even the killing of his own offspring would not cause him to feel even an ounce of guilt.

May 20, 1953

Upon finishing Florence's journal, I am overcome with grief for a woman I never knew. How she must have felt all those months, her father looming over her, threatening her and their offspring. I also understand her reasoning and the meaning of the photos. Of all the journal entries, there are six that I find the most compelling and unnerving. I will copy a few excerpts from them into mine as part of this entry, for Florence's journals will not last to much longer before they are illegible from age and decay.

Feb 14, 1937

As I suspected, Father has tried to rid my body of the little life nestled inside of me. As far as I know he has failed in his latest attempt, for I have experienced no pain or bleeding after my fall. I have noticed that the swell of my lower stomach is growing larger and, if I am correct, I was first with child in November and that would have me in or around my fourth month.

April 5, 1937

As I enter what I believe is my sixth month, all of Father's attempts to kill the very same unborn life he helped to create have failed. He swears that he will "snuff out the wretched life before it can gasp its first breath" and I have no doubt that my father will continue to attempt that very act. The sight of my swollen womb seems to further enrage Father and I fear things may have to take a drastic turn.

May 31, 1937

My birthing time is near, I can feel it. The child has settled to fewer and fewer movements and there is a pressure on my lower body, but I am not worried. Father has become weak and can no longer do much of anything. He still swears that the child will never see its first breath but I believe that I can convince him otherwise. After all, he can no longer monitor me when I cook his food.

July 2, 1937

My birthing pains have begun. The result of nine grueling months is about to come to fruition. I must go and prepare the proper necessities for the event of my child's arrival. I have no one here but Father, but he is indisposed and cannot be of either help or a threat.

July 3, 1937

It is finally over. I completed the lengthy birth as the morning sun rose over the trees. I received quite the shock when after I delivered my child, a daughter I named Alice, my body seemed to not be entirely finished. Within an hour I had delivered a second child, a son I have named Henry. I am tired and my children are crying, so I must tend to them.

July 7, 1937

I am dying. I can feel it in my heart. I am much weaker than I should be, even after birth. I can barely get up the strength to care for my children, and I know this will be my last entry. I have made sure that Father will allow my children to live and despite Father's hatred and evil spirit, he has never gone back on his word. I do not wish to simply waste away, so I shall take matters into my own hands.

May 30, 1953

The final entries of Florence's journal has kept me distracted for the past several days. This distraction has caused me to anger Cal and Ida numerous times. I don't wish to anger them, but I simply cannot get Florence and her final thoughts out of my mind.

June 4, 1953

I angered Cal one too many times today and it cost me split lip and sore ribs. I also saw the girl again as I sat at my desk. She had the most solemn look on her face, as if she knew something was about to happen. I wonder who she is; I briefly thought that perhaps the girl was Alice, but that would be impossible. There was no one here when the owner died. At least, I don't think so.

June 12, 1953

I woke up to Cal and Ida screaming this morning. When I rushed downstairs there were rats, headless and torn apart, scattered all around their room with bloody handprints along the walls and floor. Of course they believe it was me, and I dared not mention the girl I had seen before.

June 19, 1953

Cal has become progressively weaker in the past few days. He cannot even get out of bed today. Ida is distraught and believes that I am the one poisoning Cal and making him sick. I didn't mention that I had seen the girl yesterday morning with Deadly Nightshade in her hands. I didn't want to upset her further, of course, if it is Deadly Nightshade then there is nothing we can do to save Cal now.

June 25, 1953

Cal died today, Ida has left to inform the doctor and have the body removed to be buried in the cemetery. I am to wait here, so that I may pack my things and be ready to go back to the wretched house they took me from. I can hear the creaks and scratching in the walls, and I know that I will miss those sounds, along with the girl I have seen.

June 30, 1953

I cannot find Ida today. I have looked everywhere but she seems to have disappeared. I did see the girl again today though, she smiled at me. It was a joyful look, quite out of place on her pale and bedraggled face. It was a look that held unspoken promises, but I cannot fathom what they might be.

July 3, 1953

I realize the truth now. They have been watching from the day we moved in and seem to have taken a liking to me. I can see them now; they are looking at me from the adjacent room. They are smiling, inviting me to play and to join them. I think I shall, Ida is gone and Cal is dead, so there is nothing left for me here. This is our house now, as it was intended when their father died. They know all the best hiding places too, so if you are reading this remember, We Are Watching.

## In Conclusion

The diaries of the woman known as Florence were never found. It seems that "Claire" was right in assuming that Florence's writings would not survive, if they ever even existed. After fruitless hours of further searching, the group came up empty handed and decided to call it quits. Many of the groups members reported the feeling of being watched and hearing odd, out of place noises within the house.

Further research revealed that a woman named Florence did die within the house in 1937, but there are no records of an Alice or Henry ever living on the property. There were also reports of a woman named Ida disappearing shortly after her husband died while living on the property in the early 1950's, though the exact year is unknown. The other other record of inhabitation for the house was the daughter of Ida and her husband, Clarice. It is unclear if Clarice is the same woman the diary refers to as Claire in its title page.

Even so, the diary's last line, We Are Watching, is unsettling and many of the researchers refused to go back to property. The truth about the diaries may never be fully known, but for now, the citizens of Darrow's Creek are content to leave it a mystery.